

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the composition substantially free from isopropanol. See page 3, line 24 of the specification. See page 5, lines 25 - page 6, line 3 for further definition of "substantially free". The claims were rejected over the Berger, U.S. 6,043,391 in light of WO 99/05243. The amended claims distinguish more clearly over the cited art. US 6,043,391 is concerned with a new class of anionic surfactant --alkylaromatic sulfonates where instead of the sulphonate being a substituent on the aromatic ring, it is attached to an alkyl group which is a substituent on the aromatic ring. The only example of a composition which comprises the new anionic surfactant is example 7, which is a composition for increasing oil recovery in the crude oil extraction field. US '391 does make a disclosure that the surfactants may be used for other fields (col. 12, lines 34-41), but it has no teaching of how to incorporate the composition as part of a laundry detergent composition for fabric cleaning. In fact US '391 offers no teaching to one of ordinary skill in the art that the surfactants would be useful as detergents in laundry compositions, nor does it make any mention of the utility for solving the problem of fatty/oily/greasy soil removal as found on page 2 line 2 of the present application. The only detergent formulation (example 7) is a formulation to increase oil recovery and makes no teaching of whether it provides any detergency/cleaning function.

So one of ordinary skill in the art concerned with the problem of fatty/oily/greasy soil removal would not have been motivated to use the surfactants of US '391, as US '391 provides no hint of their detergency properties.

The Examiner relied on WO '243 to show that it is well known in detergent formulations to include fluorescent agents. Such materials are indeed disclosed in WO '243. However, WO '243 is concerned with different anionic surfactants -- not the alkylaromatic sulfonate surfactant as claimed (as described earlier in my response), but to sulfonates where the sulfonate group is directly attached to the aromatic ring (see page 5, formula (B-Ar-D)_a(Mq⁺)_b, where D is SO₃⁻), and for example page 11, where all surfactants have a direct aromatic-sulphonate bond.

Such compounds are expressly excluded from the claim scope (see page 8, lines 5-12 of our application). This provides an incompatible combination of references, as now WO '243 cannot be relied upon to provide motivation to formulate the alkylaromatic sulfonate surfactants of US '391 with laundry detergent materials, as there is no motivation for the skilled person to make a combination of two references which teach two very different anionic surfactants.

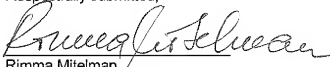
Even if a combination were made, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have arrived at the claimed invention as there is no motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to remove isopropanol from the formulation of example 7 of US '391.

Claims 1, 3-12 were rejected on the grounds of non obvious double-patenting over claims 1-6 and 1-7 of U.S. 5,389,284 and 4,950,424, respectively. Applicants traverse the rejection. Neither U.S. '284 nor '424 claims recite or suggest the aromatic alkyl sulphonate surfactant of the present invention. The present invention explicitly excludes alkylbenzene sulphonate which appears to be included in the claims in U.S. '284 and U.S.' 424. See page 8, lines 5-12 of the present specification. Consequently, it is respectfully requested that the obvious double-patenting rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be allowed to issue.

If a telephone conversation would be of assistance in advancing the prosecution of the present application, applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,


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